(d)   bearer's signature based on (a), (b) and (c) above to secure this information.

In the Drawings:

Please amend the drawings as shown in red on the attached sheets.

In the Claims:

Please cancel claims 2 and 55-58 without prejudice.

Please amend the following claims to read as shown:

1.   (Amended) A method of providing a value note comprising:

providing first information representative of a bearer's public key information, or from which a bearer's public key information can be verified;

providing second information representative of a commodity represented by the value note; and

calculating third information representative of an issuer's signature dependent on the first and second information and verifiable by means of an issuer's public key information.

4.   (Amended) A method according to claim 3, wherein the expiry information is included in the calculation of the third information.

7.   (Twice Amended) A method according to claim 5, wherein the identification information is included in the calculation of the third information.

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9. (Amended) A method according to claim 8, wherein the valid-from information is included in the calculation of the third information.

13. (Amended) A method of handling a value note, comprising:

receiving a value note comprising first information either representative of a bearer's public key or from which bearer's public key can be verified, second information representative of a commodity represented by the value note, and third information representing an issuer's signature which can be verified by information including the first and second information and an issuer's public key information;

providing redemption instruction information for the value note; and

providing a bearer's signature which is dependent on the redemption instruction information and is verifiable from said first information.

15. (Twice Amended) A method according to claim 13, wherein the value note is provided by:

providing first information representative of a bearer's public key information, or from which the bearer's public key information can be verified;

providing second information representative of a commodity represented by the value note; and

calculating third information representative of an issuer's signature dependent on the first and second information and verifiable by means of the issuer's public key information.

18. (Twice Amended) A method according to claim 13, wherein the redemption instruction information includes a reference to transfer at least a portion of the commodity to a first new value note.

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19. (Amended) A method according to claim 18, wherein the redemption instruction information includes replacement first information for the first new value note.

21. (Twice Amended) A method according to claim 18, wherein the redemption instruction information includes a reference to transfer a remainder of the commodity to a second new value note.

25. (Twice Amended) A method according to claim 13, wherein the redemption instruction information includes an identification reference for each value note referred to in the redemption instruction information, and wherein the method comprises communicating the redemption instruction information to a value note handling authority.

28. (Amended) A method of handling redemption instruction information and bearer signature information associated with a value note, the method comprising performing at least one verification prior to redeeming the value note in accordance with the redemption instruction information, the verification comprising:

verifying that the bearer signature information matches information including at least the redemption instruction information using the bearer's public key information presented in the value note or in the redemption instruction information.

30. (Twice Amended) A method according to claim 28, further comprising:

receiving a value note comprising first information representative of a bearer's public key or from which bearer's public key can be verified, second information representative of a commodity represented by the value note, and third information representing an issuer's signature which can be verified by information including the first and second information and the issuer's public key information;

providing redemption instruction information for the value note; and

providing a bearer's signature which is dependent on the redemption instruction information and is verifiable from said first information.

31. (Twice Amended) A method according to claim 28, wherein the redemption instruction information and the bearer signature information are received without a value note, and the method comprises retrieving value note information for one or more value notes identified in the redemption instruction information.

32. (Twice Amended) A method according to claim 28, further comprising verifying that an issuer signature included in the value note matches information including the bearer's public key information and a commodity represented by the value note, using an issuer's public key information.

35. (Twice Amended) A method according to claim 33, wherein at least one of the value note and the redemption instruction information includes identification information for uniquely identifying the value note, and the verification comprises ascertaining whether a value note bearing the same identification information has previously been accepted.

36. (Twice Amended) A method according to claim 28, further comprising verifying whether a counter signature matches a counter signatory's public key information in the value note.

37. (Twice Amended) A method according to claim 28, further comprising verifying whether an endorsement signature in the value note matches information including a predefined message using a message endorsing signatory's public key information.

38.　(Twice Amended)　A method according to claim 28, wherein the value note includes expiry information representing at least one of a time and a date of expiry, and the method further comprises testing the value note on the basis of the expiry information.

39.　(Twice Amended)　A method according to claim 28, wherein the value note includes valid-from information representing at least one of a time and a date from which the value note may validly be redeemed, and the method further comprises testing the value note on the basis of the valid-from information.

40.　(Twice Amended)　A method according to claim 28, further comprising redeeming the value note in accordance with the redemption instruction information, wherein the step of redeeming the value note comprises issuing a first new value note representing at least a portion of the commodity of the value note being redeemed.

42.　(Twice Amended)　A method according to claim 40, wherein the step of redeeming the value note comprises issuing a second new value note representing a remainder of the commodity of the value note being redeemed.

46.　(Twice Amended)　A method according to claim 40, wherein at least one new value note is issued which includes information indicative of at least one of a time and a date from which the new value note can be redeemed, and wherein the at least one of a time and a date is later than either a time or a date of issuance.

47.　(Twice Amended)　A method according to claim 28, further comprising communicating each value note electronically to a remote party corresponding to the source of the value note being redeemed.

49.   (Amended) A method wherein an electronic representation of a commodity is issued by an issuing authority, the electronic representation including information representing at least one of a time and a date from which the electronic representation is available for redemption, said at least one of a time and a date being later than either a time or a date of issuance, whereby the electronic representation is not available for redemption immediately after issuance.

51.   (Twice Amended) A method according to claim 18, wherein the method comprises generating a first character string message, generating a second character string message from said first message in the redemption instruction information for inclusion in the first new value note.

52.   (Amended) A method according to claim 51, further comprising the steps of:

communicating the value note, the redemption instruction information, and the bearer's signature information to a value note handling authority;

applying a blinding function to the second character string message to generate a blinded second character string message;

issuing the first new value note including the blinded second character string message, in accordance with the redemption instruction information;

communicating the first new value note to a respondent; and

providing endorsement signature information from the respondent dependent on the first and second character string message and related to the blinding function such that the endorsement signature information is verifiable against both the first character string message and the second character string message; and

communicating the first value note with the respondent's endorsement signature information to a value note handling authority.

53.   (Amended) A method according to claim 52, further comprising the step of unblinding the blinded second character string message by the respondent to yield the first character string message prior to providing the respondent's endorsement signature information.

61.   (Amended) A value note comprising:

first information representative of a bearer's public key information, or from which the bearer's public key information can be verified;

second information representative of a commodity represented by the value note; and

third information representative of an issuer's signature which is verifiable from information including the first information, the second information and the issuer's public key information.

62.   (Amended) A record carrier on which is recorded value note information including:

first information representative of a bearer's public key information, or from which the bearer's public key information can be verified;

second information representative of a commodity represented by the value note; and

third information representative of an issuer's signature which is verifiable from information including the first information, the second information and the issuer's public key information.

63.   (Amended) A transmission signal representing a value note and comprising:

first information representative of a bearer's public key information, or from which the bearer's public key information can be verified;

second information representative of a commodity represented by the value note; and

third information representative of an issuer's signature which is verifiable from information including the first information, the second information and the issuer's public key information.

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65. (Twice Amended) A method of providing redemption instruction information for one or more value notes each being as defined in claim 63, the method comprising:

providing a list of identification information for identifying each existing value note to be used in the transaction;

providing a list of redemption requests, each request including information representing a result of the transaction, and a commodity value associated with that result;

providing a bearer's signature information representing a bearer's signature which is verifiable at least one of the redemption instruction information and information in said value notes, and the bearer's public key information.

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67. (Amended) A method according to claim 65, further comprising providing information representing the bearer's public key information.

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69. (Twice Amended) A method according to claim 65, further comprising communicating the redemption instruction information, with or without the individual value notes referred to in the redemption instruction information, to a money handling authority.

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73. (Amended) An electronic representation of a commodity, the representation including first information representing at least one of a time and a date

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up to which the electronic representation is guaranteed, and second information representing at least one of a time and a date later than either the time or the date of the first information and up to which the electronic representation is valid but without a guarantee.

74.   (Twice Amended) Apparatus for carrying out a method as defined in claim 1, comprising at least one bank terminal, at least one user terminal, and a network interconnecting the at least one bank terminal and the at least one user terminal over which the value note can be communicated.